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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iraq - Guantanamo -
Anti-Americanism Somalia Iran
PARIS - Wednesday, June 07 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iraq - Guantanamo - Anti-Americanism
Somalia
Iran

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic issues dominate today's front pages and many editorials, with the Socialist Party's internal strife making news, while Iraq, Somalia and Iran dominate international news.

Le Figaro carries an op-ed entitled: "Guantanamo, Putting an End to Anti-American Propaganda" by University Professor Yves Roucaute, an opinion piece which stands apart from the traditional accusations against the U.S., and gives refutation to "The Road to Guantanamo" movie opening today. After tracing legal arguments for the camp, he concludes: "Guantanamo is a sign of courage in the midst of a world war against terrorism." (See Part C)

La Croix leads with "Iraq: An Endless War" and devotes three inside pages to "The War in Iraq, The U.S. Army's Nightmare," (See Part C) "Iraq Triggers Cold Sweat Among the Republicans" and an interview with political expert Walid Phares who says: "If the Americans leave Iraq, the country will fall apart." Another article by Francois d'Alancon is entitled "Iraqi Armed Groups Dictate their Law." Le Figaro reports on its front page that "despite the liberation of 2 500 prisoners, Iraq's new Prime Minister al-Maliki is failing to give his government coherence."

In Les Echos Sergio Romano pens an op-ed from Milan entitled "Withdrawing from Iraq: Italy and America." He opines that while Prodi will withdraw Italy's troops to "satisfy his election promise, the new Italian government is encumbered by this pull out because it could negatively affect Italian American relations without resolving the problem of Baghdad." (See Part C)

Liberation announces the opening of the "Road to Guantanamo" a film "which has already elicited much controversy. The subject naturally demands it, seeing as it shows how the Americans lost their sense of democracy and torture in Guantanamo, whether one is a Taliban, a member of Al-Qaeda or a poor soul who landed there by mistake." La Croix comments: "it is a film put together from tales told by three British men who were caught in the Afghan turbulence and landed in Guantanamo. The film is first and foremost a cry of indignation. It is not a political pamphlet; it aims to recall the existence of a detention camp ruled by principles which deprive human beings of their basic rights and go against democracy."

The situation in Somalia and the U.S. support for "warlords" is analyzed in Le Monde, while Le Figaro titles its report: "Resistance to Islamists Is Building Up." FR2 television in its report recalled the failed 1992 "give back hope" operation and added that "after the departure of the 28 000 U.S. Marines there was total anarchy." In Liberation Roland Marchal, a researcher at the CNRS, comments: "Mogadishu is not Somalia... The tribunals have ensured the capital's security. But governing a city of over a million people, or even an entire country is something else all together. The tribunals were united in battle, but I do not think they have a vocation to handle administrative issues... They are hampered by their ethnic divisions."

Iran is "studying the West's proposals" according to Le Figaro, which Tehran finds "positive" and also "ambiguous" according to Liberation. (See Part C)

Les Echos carries an op-ed entitled "European Stock Exchanges and American Imperialism" which comments on the NYSE and Euronext merger. In this regard Le Figaro reports on its front page: "Chirac Criticizes the Franco-American Stock Axis." In its economic pages, Le Figaro Economie, the report explains Chirac's preference for a marriage between Euronext and the Deutsche Borse. The editorial in La Tribune is entitled "Interference," and comments: "What is Chirac trying to do? His stance in favor of the Deutsch Borse is both familiar and disturbing. Disturbing, because if Chirac though he could influence the merger, he might have spoken up before the betrothal... Familiar, because the President once again demonstrates

the propensity for French politicians to put their nose in affairs that do not concern them..."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iraq

"Guantanamo, Putting an End to Anti-American Propaganda"
University Professor Yves Roucaute in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/07): "In the midst of a world war against terrorism, the Guantanamo affair is a serious matter. Instead of giving our support to those who are on the front lines, the poison of anti-Americanism is undermining the morale of our nations... This is an asymmetric war, detention saves lives, and prisoners are being liberated a few at a time. Critics of Guantanamo would rather listen to the liberated prisoners than see the conditions of the camp for themselves... Anti-Americanism seems increasingly to have become the opium of the people. The heart of a world without a soul where morality has no place... If the true strength of a Republic resides in its virtue, virtue is measured by the amount of courage used to fight in its name. Guantanamo is courage."

"Withdrawing from Iraq: Italy and America"
Sergio Romano in right-of-center Les Echos (06/07): "In a few days, after consultations with the Americans in Washington, the government of Romano Prodi is going to announce a calendar for the pull-out of Italian troops from Iraq... The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massimo D'Alema, recalled that the Silvio Berlusconi government had already decided on this pull-out before the end of last year... I fear that, behind this apparent nonchalance, there is a certain embarrassment. The government desires to keep its promises, but it wants to avoid the 'Zapatero effect' and must keep in mind two requirements. It does not want to waste an investment that has cost it blood and money. And it does not want to prejudice relations with the United States. Obligated to pass through a narrow window between the moderate center and the anti-American left of his coalition, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is hiding behind a truism: we already decided it and we're going to do it. Is this a reasonable decision? It would not be if the American government could show a convincing program for the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq. But all that President Bush and his collaborators can do is to repeat the habitual litany of optimistic and reassuring predictions. If they were to recognize that their projects have failed, and if they opened themselves up to new perspectives, we could discuss them... but for the time being, that is an unlikely prospect. If he decided on a pull-out, George Bush would be admitting defeat and would thereby be committing a sort of political hari kari."

"The U.S. Army's Nightmare"
Stephanie Fontenoy in Catholic La Croix (06/07): "The Haditha killings are the nightmare everybody was afraid of in the U.S. The opponents to the war said the soldiers would become an army of occupation, unable to distinguish innocent civilians from violent insurgents... That the Iraqi invasion would be like Vietnam... After three years in Iraq, the distance between American troops and the Iraqi population remains... In Uncle Sam's army, there is a feeling of malaise. Says Sergeant Mike Dover who trained at Forts Irwin and Polk: 'Sometimes the feeling for revenge takes over. It's difficult not to respond point blank...' Says Mathew Friedman of the center for post-traumatic troubles: 'Iraq is a pressure cooker. It is a situation where men are constantly concerned for their safety...' U.S. troops are trained before they go to Iraq... But between training and the actual situation on the ground, the gap is huge. Witness the fact that those who allegedly killed 'in cold blood' the civilians in Haditha were Marines: the U.S.'s best trained soldiers."

Iran

"Tehran Playing for Time"
Veronique Soule in left-of-center Liberation (06/07): "It's neither yes or no. Iran, which finds the West's proposals 'positive' but 'ambiguous,' is playing for time. It wants to give up nothing while at the same time keeping the door open. Meanwhile, the international community which is united on the goal but divided over the means, is giving it time... While Javier Solana has kept secret the details of the proposals, President Bush said last evening he judged Tehran's reaction to be 'positive.'"

"Iran Studies the West's Proposals"
Maurin Picard in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/07): "Tehran is taking its time... The ball is now in its camp. Iran has a few weeks to take a stand. In short, the alternative is as follows: either Iran agrees to stop its uranium enrichment, a prelude to détente with the West, or it favors its nuclear program, thus putting into motion the sanctions program which has now been agreed to by Moscow and Beijing."

Somalia

"In Somalia, a Reversal for Washington, Fearing Al Qaeda Will Settle In"
Corine Lenes and Jean-Philippe Remy in left-of-center Le Monde (06/07): "Washington showed concern about the take over of Mogadishu by Islamic tribal militia... and although it said it supported the establishment of democratic institutions, 'it did not want to see

Somalia turning into a haven for foreign terrorists...' But the State Department's spokesman did not clearly say whether the U.S. had proof of such presence, saying only it 'had real concerns...' But according to the U.S. press, Washington believes three of the individuals responsible for the Nairobi and Dar-es Salaam attacks against the U.S. Embassies are hiding among Somali Islamists... This takeover is a failure for the Bush administration... which, since 9/11, has used the Horn of Africa as a main theatre of operations by CENTCOM... The recent progression made by the Union of Islamic Tribunals has led the U.S. to support the new alliance of Somali 'warlords' to stop the Islamists. But the opposite has happened... According to the International Crisis Group, the CIA has been sending between 100,000 to 150,000 dollars a month to these warlords... as well as surveillance equipment to track Al-Qaeda. This support may be in contradiction with the arms embargo imposed by the UN... It appears that this 'support' for the warlords is dividing the Bush administration: according to sources in Nairobi, two diplomats stationed in Nairobi, Michael Zorick, in charge of the Somali dossier, and Michael Fitzpatrick, in charge of political affairs, left their posts abruptly, after opposing Washington's policy."

"Responsibility Lies With International Community"

Isabelle Dath on private RTL radio (06/07): "This is a serious setback for the U.S... whose strategy has clearly failed. In spite of the fact that it spent millions of dollars on the local warlords... they kicked them out of the country. The U.S. is concerned that an Islamist regime in Somalia will create a favorable environment for al Qaeda to set up camp. If this has not already happened... America's concerns are justified, but between us, everyone should acknowledge their responsibility. Somalia would not be in the situation that it is in today if it had not been completely abandoned by the international community as a whole."

"Resistance to Islamists Is Building Up."

Tanguy Berthemey in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/07): "Diplomats fear Washington's reaction. The fall of Mogadishu is a stinging failure for Washington, which has for the past months supported the 'warlords' to counter the Islamic militia's rise... For the U.S., the prospect of a 'Talibanization' of Somalia is unacceptable..."
STAPLETON